

Mr. Speaker, the Federal minimum wage is now the lowest that it has been, adjusted for inflation, in over 50 years. Here in Congress we have not made an adjustment; we have not given the lowest-income, most hard-pressed economic citizens of our country any raise since 1997.

I thought for a moment that there was a glimpse of hope as we have seen a proposal that finally passed in the Appropriations Committee that would have made in order an amendment that would have raised it gradually from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour. But now we see this is tied up in partisan politics, and it looks as though the Republican leadership is not going to allow the House of Representatives to vote on giving low-income Americans a salary increase.

Mr. Speaker, in my State of Oregon the voters have gone ahead and passed a statewide initiative that provides an automatic increase in the minimum wage, taking it out of politics. It is supported by our public, it is good for our economy, and it is good for our citizens. I hope we can do the same here in Congress.